



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0523

December 19, 2019

The Honorable Francis Collins
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Director Collins:

I write in support of the application submitted by MiraVista Diagnostics (MiraVista) for \$3 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant program. Securing SBIR grant funding would enable MiraVista to conduct studies to advance development of enhanced diagnostic tools for *Coccidioidomycosis*, commonly referred to as Valley Fever.

As you know, Valley Fever is an infection caused by inhaling the spores of fungus commonly found in the soil in the American southwest, but also in Central and South America. In 2017, there were 14,364 cases of Valley Fever reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with the vast majority in Arizona and California. However, the CDC acknowledges the actual number of Valley Fever cases is likely higher, partly because the disease presents flu-like symptoms and is frequently misdiagnosed. Treatments are limited and there is currently no approved cure or vaccine for this disease, so the development of a quick, accurate, and standardized method to diagnose Valley Fever is critical to help health care providers expedite the diagnostic process, which will lead to more precise treatment, limit the impact of the disease, and prevent the unnecessary use of antibiotics.

MiraVista intends to partner with the Valley Fever Institute at Kern Medical, located in Bakersfield, California to recruit patients and evaluate the accuracy of MiraVista Valley Fever diagnostics. SBIR grant funding will enable MiraVista to enhance and validate its anti-*Coccidioides* Antibody Assay, which will help provide the needed data to move the diagnostic into primary care settings. Again, I support the MiraVista's application for SBIR grant funding and respectfully ask for your thorough consideration of their application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

KEVIN MCCARTHY
House Republican Leader